VOICES OF WOMEN IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI

A SYNOPSIS

Submitted for the consideration of

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For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D)

In the subject of

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Arts.

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PROFORMA FOR REGISTRATION OF TOPIC FOR Ph.D.

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I. Origin of the Research Problem.

Women comprise about half the world's population but their share in various areas of activity has been totally disproportionate to their numerical strength. For centruries they have been denied full justice- social, economic, political and constitutional and largely ignored as the 'weaker sex' .

The Mid-Twentieth Century saw the upsurges of a new awareness about the women's marginalized position resulting into the birth of Women's liberation Movement. Literature being the mirror of society does not remain unaffected and it also explores the 'Women's Question' Extensively and vociferously. In recent times, the question of the relative status often and women has often engaged the attention of the authors all over the world.

II . Hypothesis

This work examine the theme and brief summary of the Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni novel. The mistress of spices, Sister of My heart, The vine of Desire , Queen of dreams.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni point out difference between eastern and western cultures and point out the searching politician , and cultural condition in the present novels. The diasporas Indian novelists try to explore and interpret India significantly in its myriad aspect social, political , economic and cultural. These mythical sorties were designed to condition women to her different role in her family as daughter, wife and mother and they relegated her to a secondary position.

III. Significant of Research

As we have seen in the earlier list the present study will add one more case study of the novels by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, though it will not be sole aim of the study. It will probe into feminine culture psychology of the protagonists in the novels of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni .The study can provide information to NGOs regarding women's conditions as reflected in literature, which will help women empowerment. It will create reference material and provide scope for further research.

IV. Methods of Research

This study will use the basic methods of literary research such as close reading explication, illustration cultural political and analysis. However, the main aim being the study of the lives of women it will use the 'Feminist Literary Theory' as its paradigm. While attempting a comprehensive critical conclusion the research scholar plans to bring out a comparative study of the works selected for the study.

V. The scope and Limits of research

The broad area of the present study is Indina English Literature . The Indian English writer selected for present study is Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni The scope. Contemporary literature is over widening . It is possible that the writer may add a few more books to her literary canon in future. But the present study will limit itself up to the books published by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Therefore, the researcher has selected her four novels: The mistress of Spices (1997) , Sister of My Heart (1999) , The vine of Desire (2002) , Queen of dreams (2004)

VI . Objective and Aims

1) Many of the difference between eastern and western cultural study for Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni
2) True happiness study of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni novel to understand analyses theme and concept.
3) To trace out the women, social identity on CBD novel.
4) To completion between brief summary. The diasporas Indian novelists try to explore and interpret India significantly in its myriad aspect social, political , economic and cultural.
5) These mythical sorties were designed to condition women to her different role in her family as daughter, wife and mother and they relegated her to a secondary position.

CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

Once Indian writing in English has now will established in Indian English literature in the course of little time of about one century. Indian English literature, particularly faction, has come to its full swing . The Post- Modern scenario in the English novel in India is bright one. Compared to other genres, the novel has a wider readership and woman writers, in particular, prefer to novel to other forms of writing.

The first English novel in India Rajmohan's Wife was written in the second half of the nineteenth century. A study of the triumvirate of Indian fiction in English Mulkraj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao provided a true picture of the Indian women. In their fiction women were presented more as symbols and less as people.

Post Independence fiction by women has achieved a separate indentify. It must be stressed that this period witnessed an upsurges in fiction written by women who are aware of their individuality, their aspirations, their strengths as well as their weakness. Kamala Markandya, Ruth prawer Jhbwala and Nayantara Sahgal are the women writers of this phase.

In the second phase of fiction in English by Indian women writers the triad –Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Bharati Mukharjee portrayed 'women' who aspire attempt and strive to be their true selves.

The last decade of the 20th century witnessed a sudden support in feminist writing in Indian English fiction. A group of Indian women novelists in their hybridism of thought and multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious social dimension have contextualized the women's problems in general and middle class and middle class and upper class women in particular.

Some Indian women novelists in English like Geeta Hariharan, Sahsi Deshpande, Arundhati Roay, Meena Alexander, Anita Nair, Chitra banerjee divakaruni , have tried with sincerity and honesty to deal with the physical , psychological and emotional stress syndrome of women.

Major preoccupation in recent women's writing has been a delineation of inner life and subtle interpersonal relationships in a culture where individualism and protest have often remain alien ideas, and marital bliss and the woman's role at home is a central focus; it is interesting to see the emergence of not just an essential Indian sensibility but an expression of cultural displacement . Today it can be well said that the most important writin by Inians is being produced in the diaspora by such people as Salman Rushdie, Kamla Markandaya, -

Chitra banerjee divakaruni , Bharati Mukherjee, Vikram Seth , Amitav Ghosh, Anita Desai, V.S. Naipaul and Hanif Kureishi.

Chitra banerjee divakaruni has joined the growing number of women writers from India on whom the image of the suffering but stoic women eventually breaking traditional boundaries has had a significant impact.

Divakaruni's writing comprises poetry and fiction. She has to her credit two collection of short stories namely Arranged Marrage (1955) and The unknown Errors of our lives (2001), children's books namely Neela : Victory songs (2002) and The Conch Bearer (2003) and novel like The mistress of Spices (1997) Sister of My Heart (1999) , The vine of Disire (2002) ; Queen of dreams (2004) . She has won many awards like the Hackney Literary Award , Barbara Deming Memorial Award , Editor's choice Award , Gerbode Foundation Award , Pen Syndicated Fiction Award, Bay area Book Reviewers Award , American Books Award; she has also won many prizes like Paterson poetry Prize, Pushcart Prize and Allen Ginsberg Poetry Prize.

In 1995 her first book of short stories Arranged Marriage was critically acclaimed and received many awareds, including the American Book Award.

Divakaruni's First volume of short stories, Arranged Marriage (1997), explores the cross- cultural experience of womanhood through a feminist perspective, a theme that continued to inform her work.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni made an indelible impression on the literary world with her first novel The Mistress of Species ()1997) , a magical tale of love and herbs. Tilo, proprietress of the Spice Bazaar in Oakland, California is not the elderly Indian women she appears to be. Trained as a mistress of spices, she evokes the magical powers of the spices of her homeland to help her customers. These customers, mostly first or second- generation immigrants, are struggling to adapt their old world ideals to the unfamiliar New world. Though trapped in an old woman's body and forbidden to leave the store, Tilo is unable to keep the required distance from her patrons lives. Her yearning to join the world of mortals angers the spaces. Tilo finds herself caught up not only in the lives of several Indian immigrants but also in the life of a young Native American, Rava, who in the process of getting in touch with his background seduces her out of her enchanting powers and pushes her into a very ordinary life of love and community.

Sister of My heart (1999) tells the tale of two cousins born on the same day, their premature births brought on by mysterious occurrence that claims the lives of both their fathers. The two cousins are Anjali and Basudha, known as Anju and Sudha Respectively.

Their fathers go in search of treasure, for a cave full of rubies, and are mysteriously dead Sudha is beautiful ; Anju is not beautiful . The girls love each other like sisters. The bond between them isso strong that nothing can break it. Sudha grows up bliving that her father was a no-good schemer who brought ruin on her cousin Anju's upper-class father. As they mature Anju dreams of college, Sudha of children, but arranged marriages divide and thwart them. Anju adjusts to live in California with Sunil, a man who lusts after Sudha. Sudha grapples with mother-in-law who turns to goddess Shasti to fill Sudha's womb rather than to a doctor for her sterile son, Ramesh. Ultimately the tie between Anju and Sudha supersedes all other love, as each sustains painful loss to save the other.

Sudha walks out of the marriage with Ramesh, when Mrs. Sanyal her mother-in-law urges her to abort the female foetus. Anjushas a miscarriage , as she hopes to bring Sudha to America. Sudha learns the truth that her father is in no way responsible for the mysterious deaths that occurred in the family. She no longer needs to right his wrongs and finds that all along her affection for Anju has not been dictated by necessity. Set in the two world of San Francisco and India that exceptionally moving novel tell a story at once familiar and exotic.

The vine of desire (2002) is a sequel to Sister of My Heart. It picks up where Sudha, having been divorced because she refused to abort a female foetusd , comes to America to visit her cousin Anuju and her husband Sunil, who has never got over an early crush on Sudha at the time of Sudha and Anju's double marriage. The two cousins have travelled a lifetime away from their home city of Culutta to California. Anju is miserable after a miscarriage and its unhappy effect on her marriage . Sudha had fled both a husband whose family forced her abort her daughter, and a first love, Ashok, who wants to take care of her and her child. They hope to find solace in their sister-like relationship. Anju uses Sudha to help her complete with a growing restlessness as well as her dissatisfaction with her husband Sunil. Sudha is both comfortable and suffocated by her life as an escapee form her past, becoming a servant in her cousin's household, At the same time, each coman must eventually acknowledge Anjus's husband's unspoken but obvious attraction to Sudha. The novel carries the cousins through the inevitable betrayal of Anju and Sunil's marriage; but more important through the gradual realiation on the part of both cousins, although in very different ways, of their independence from the traditional expectations that have been laid on them. Anju riches a position through college education and a writing group that takes her stories seriously. Sudha understand that the desire for her beauty on the part of Sunil, her first love Ashok and a new love Lalit, is a trap against which she must guard herself.

Queen of Dreams (2003) , Tells double story of a mother Mrs. Gupta, who is gifted as dream teller and doaughter Rakhi who is trying to live in her shadow. The daughter was born in the Untilled States, her mother having fled to India to escape the confinements of her gifts and to experience passion and motherhood. But the gift proves to be inescapable, causing her to help many persons, but to remain distant from her husband and daughter, Rakhi. The mother dies in a strange accident, bringing the daughter and father together over an attempt to translate and understand Mrs. Gupta's journals. Their relationship heals other, such as the daughter Rakhis' with her musician husband, Sonny . But 9/11 reveals Rakhi that her own daughter , Jona has the dream telling gift, like her grandmother, and so she must reconcile with that as well.

Chapter – II

Fusion of Oriental Values with Occidental Ethos in The Mistress of Spices and Queen of Dreams.

The westernization of the east is a process of cultural exchange or assimilation. The cultural change and the cross fertilization of cultures is inevitable. There are a lot of difference between American and Indian cultures and values. American culture is an amalgam of different cultures. In the matter of tradition the Americans are in a fortunate position because they have no ancient culture like the Indian culture , India, however, has had a long tradition.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an Asian American with her ancestral roots in Bengal, Indian. She has transcended boundaries, negotiating two different worlds form various perspectives. She attempts to interlace the elements of myth, magic and ancient culture alongside the contemporary culture. The east-west confrontation, or clash between tradition and modernity is the impulse behind the woks of acclaimed migrant writers. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni tries to fuse the oriental values with the occidental ethos. She often focuses on characters balancing two worlds, particularly on Indian immigrants' struggle through life in America. Most of her works are about the Indian immigrants in the United States from the author's native region of Bengal and the stories are often told by female narrators form the first person point of view. Living in the United states , Divakaruni becomes more aware of the difference in culture which urges her to explore it in all its essentials.

Apart from the melting of the two cultures, Devakaruni succeeds in presenting the complex consciousness of the South Asian diasporic women and the process of identity formation . In the novels Sister of My Heart and The vine of Desire, Devakaruni Tries to explore the psyche of the characters, Anju and Sudha . In the following chapter Divakaruni, presents to the readers the struggle, tribulations and subordination faced by two Indian born girls and how they find their independence and empowerment.

Chapter III

The Paradigmatic Shift : From Subordination to Empowerment in Sister of My Heart and The vine of Desire.

Women's empowerment can be defined as the changing perception of how women feel about themselves. It can also be viewed as a force which gives women the courage to shed off the feeling of inferiority. Women are empowered to such an extent that they take charge for the environment in which they live. Empowerment points out to woman the need to fight for her right and privileges in order to lead a comfortable life. It means something that can enable her to create a new atmosphere and to face challenges as a woman. It means to give women the power, ability and resources to move beyond cultural , economic, social, religious and political restrictions, so that they can be more assertive.

Divakaruni's concentration on the lives of Indian women wrestling with cultural shackles, while perceiving the everyday affairs of their lives, has made her popular with women worldwide as well as a critical success. Sister of My Heart, deals with how the lives of two women undergo changes by marriage as one woman goes to California, and the other stays behind India. The book explores the tension between the desire of mothers who embrace traditional Indian culture and the cousins who exposé the new western culture.

Her next novel The vine of Desire maintains the story of Anju and Sudha. Far away from Culcutta, the city of their childhood, and after years of leaving separate lives, Anjus and Sudha renew their friendship in America. In The vine of Desire, Devakaruni portrays the rewards and perils of breaking freeform the past, often contradictory emotions that shape the passage to independence.

Divakaruni poignantly explores the struggle of Indian women as they seek new pastures in a world that would have them remain submissive. Her characters struggle to release themselves form a tradition bound society in order to gain and independent identity.

Chapter IV

The Diasporic Pulse of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

Alienation , adoption, assimilation, despair, discontentment, death, nostalgia, marginalization,, re-adjustment and rootlessness are some of the features of the diasporas writing . The gap between home, i.e., the culture of origin and world, i.e., the culture of adoption remains unabridged and the boundaries are often in conflict. The migrant existentiality that determines a specific aesthetics is faced with two centers, the external colonial or modernist centre filtering into a personal identity.

The Mistress of Spices brings together a panoramic view of socio-cultural experience of the characters in India and America. It is also a novel about the quest of the characters in search of stability. Sister of My Heart revolves around the dizygotic bondage between Anju and Sudha.

The Vine of Desire continues like story of the friends the two young women at the centre of Devakaruni's novel Sister of My Heart.

Divakaruni exemplifies the distance between the originating culture of immigrant parents and the daily lives of their children raised in America which is part of the second-generation experience . Divakaruni explores the ideas of marriage though such characters like Anju , Sudha and Geeta. Marriage loses it significance in the evolving culture of the South Asian Americans.

Divakaruni also reveals the transience of these cultural borderlands for it is only the second- generation who live in a world so deeply influenced by the culture of their parent's homelands while also so firmly entrenched in the American way of life.

Chapter V

Summing Up

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is one of the foremost writers of the diasporic literature. Divakaruni gives more importance gives more imkportance to women characters. In her novels she has explored the physical and phychological tension and the tortures to which the immigrant women are subjected. She has represented women as actively upholding and shaping class, cultural and gender structures within the community, home and marriage. On reading her novels a new empowering image of immigrant women in evident. The complex position of Indian women is also highlighted . Divakaruni has her finger accurately on the diasporic pulse, fusing eastern values with the western ethos.

This chapter will make a comprehensive comparative statement on the major analyses done in the earlier four chapters regarding the selected four novels by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and it will sum-up the study.

Research Scholar **Research Guide**

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